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COCOM Doc. 3472

Date: March 23, 1959

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COORDINATING COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM BY THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION

Concerning

THE EXPORT OF COMMUNICATIONS CABLE TO THE USSR

REF: COCOM Doc. 3436

1. The United States Delegation wishes to supplement the information provided to the Committee in its Memorandum of March 18 (COCOM Doc. 3464) with certain classified intelligence which it believes essential to understanding the significance of the communications cable under discussion.
2. The United States Delegation wishes to emphasize the need to protect the SECRET classification of the information contained in this memorandum.
3. The United States Government believes that the developing pattern of Soviet orders for communications cable, now totalling about 6000 kilometers, confirms intelligence studies revealing that the Soviet Union is rushing completion of an early warning network. The claim that the cable is supposed to follow railway lines and to be used for railway signals does not detract from the validity of estimates that it has significant military applications. It is entirely logical that such communications cable should be placed on the railroad right of way to facilitate installation and servicing, particularly in remote areas not supplied with adequate highways.
4. The United States Government does not contend that the cable in question is not suitable for railway signal purposes nor that it may not also be used for railway traffic control. However, the United States Government is convinced that such uses are at all times subordinated to military needs. It is unreasonable to assume that the Soviet Union would embark on the "crash" program indicated by their concentrated purchasing effort and expend the time, effort and money required to lay cable of these specifications simply for railroad operation.
5. The specifications of the cable, which it will be recalled are ideal for modern carrier frequency service and would permit as many as 2,000 two way teletype circuits, belie the Soviet claim that the cable is to be used only for railway communications.
6. Its capacity and makeup, i.e., the number and size of conductors, its metallic sheathing and shielding as well as the method of grouping the wires in quads, all indicate that this cable is specifically designed to overcome existing military communications shortages as well as to serve railroad needs. In the United States, modern centralized traffic control cable, which is also intended to carry all additional railway communications traffic, uses far fewer than the 61 conductors specified by the Russians.

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7. United States intelligence estimates also indicate that, in addition to the Soviet rush program to construct an early warning network, there is a serious shortage of communications cable needed for other military purposes. Such cable is essential to alleviate the present lack of capacity and the unreliability of existing long distance telecon services for military and air defense purposes to all points east of Moscow. The cable being sought by the Soviet Union is ideally adapted to these purposes.

8. It is these considerations, together with those stated in its earlier Memorandum to the Committee which convince the United States Government that the cable being sought is unquestionably embargoed by Item 1526 and constitutes a highly strategic commodity intended by the Soviet Union for direct military application. The United States, therefore strongly urges all Member Governments to maintain their embargo on this cable to the Sino-Soviet bloc.

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